



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – MAY 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Isn't Mother Nature a fickle lady? This spring seems to be holding off longer than usual. We have a 70-degree day followed by a 30-degree day with light snow/rain, and repeat. Feeding the packages of bees we just installed might continue until we get enough warm sunny days for the bees to forage. Hopefully the syrup you're feeding them is leading to lots of fresh honey comb. No dandelions by me yet but early spring flowers like the daffodils my wife planted are in full bloom despite a few frosty nights. I've seen a few bumble bees out looking for something to forage on but no honey bees yet.

A big thank you to Ralph Brindise and John Leibinger for driving up to Heritage Honeybee to get the packages and then pass them out. In the photo left to right are Al Fullerton, Carl Christensen, John Adamski, John Leibinger, Marcin Matelski, Ralph Brindise, Tim Keefe and Erik Sheldon, with Marianne Hill in front. Those that



helped but weren't in the photo are Dave and Christy Binz.

We also had a booth at Gardenfest which was held at MCC on the same day that the packages were distributed.

We installed 3 packages in the mentor hives at MCC and had 4 new beekeepers there to learn how to do it along with John Leibinger, Stephanie Slater and me. We had to get everything moved so we could set the hives up in their new location, which is a nice area on the opposite side of the farm outbuilding from where we were last year. Willie Pankey, Robin Tibbits, Amy Dinello, and Steve Jambor all received valuable hands-on experience setting up the hives and installing the packages. Our nuc distribution is right around the corner (they'll be installed by the time Sweet Stuff is sent out) so another educational experience will be done when we install the nucs.

As we begin a new beekeeping season remember that we have around 200 members in NIBA and most of them are willing to answer questions or help you out if





needed. Make friends with other members, find out who has bees near you, and ask for help when you need it. We are like an extended family--we have that weird cousin Eddi--but we want

each of us to succeed as beekeepers. NIBA provides speakers and invests in other clubs' speaker presentations so we can all become better beekeepers. Whether this is your first year or your tenth year, you will learn by watching these presentations. Take notes or take photos of the presentation and add them to a file to access later when you have more time to absorb what was taught. We have 30 minutes dedicated to newbees before our monthly 7:00 meeting so you can ask questions. We were all there at one time so don't hold back on asking questions. We have members with a lot of years spent keeping bees and they will help you if you need help. Success for all of us is the best outcome for NIBA!

We will come up with a mentor schedule for the hives at MCC in the near future. Sign up and get the experience you need to succeed.

We have 2 events that we need volunteers for in May. The first is on May 21st at the Colonel Palmer House at 660 Terra Cotta Ave in Crystal Lake. The event runs from

10am to 2pm but we'll need volunteers there at 9am to set up and some to stay after to break things down. This is our first year doing this, so I'm not sure what to expect, but we'll be setup to sell honey, hand out brochures and answer questions on bees and beekeeping. We'll probably be set up outside so we'll have a small 10X10 canopy we can have for cover if it's raining or snowing this year! Our contact for the event told me he might have us setup in the house, but he hasn't done this before so it's new to him too.

On Sunday May 22nd we have Planet Palooza, an event in Woodstock on the Square. This runs from 10am to 6pm with live music from 2pm to 6pm. We will need volunteers there for setup at 9pm and to break things down after 6pm. We will possibly have 2 tables setup in different areas, one to sell honey and the other to hand out brochures and talk to people about bees and beekeeping. I'm going to set up a SignupGenius page for this since it goes for 8 hours. Woodstock doesn't allow beekeeping within the City limits so this could be a good first step in changing that.

If you can volunteer for one of these events please text me at 815-861-1237. Both of these events sound fun, so maybe volunteer for a couple of hours and spend some time at the event. I'm interested in the music at Planet Palooza. The first group is a teenage "House Band" from School of Rock in Barrington and the second group is The Three Beards. There will be food trucks on the square from 2pm to 6pm and of course, the great restaurants on the Square are available, too.

Illinois State Beekeepers Association

Summer Meeting - June 3 and 4, 2022

McHenry County College

Crystal Lake, Illinois

Agenda

Friday, June 3

1900 **A deadout Workshop with Dr. Dewey Caron**

or

The Nicot Queen Rearing System with Doug Leedle

Saturday, June 4

0900 Greeting

0915 **Have you read a good book lately – reading brood frames like a book**

Dr. Dewey Caron, Emeritus Professor of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology,
Univ of Delaware, & Affiliate Professor, Dept Horticulture, Oregon State
University

1030 Break

1045 **Why You and the Honey Bee Health Coalition are Important**

Jerry Hayes, Editor of Bee Culture

1200 Lunch

1300 State of Illinois Beekeeping

The officers of ISBA

1330 **Talking with Jerry**

A Question-and-Answer Session with Jerry Hayes

1400 **Benefits of Propolis to Honey Bees**

Ben Sallmann, University of Minnesota Spivak Bee Lab

1530 Closing comments

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Heartland Apiculture Society (HAS) – 2022 Conference – June 2022 in Indiana
<https://www.heartlandbees.org/has-2022-evansville-in/>

American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) – On-demand beekeeping classes
<https://www.abfnet.org/page/education>

Michigan State University Webinars
<https://pollinators.msu.edu/resources/beekeepers/webinars/past-webinars/>

University of Minnesota Bee Lab Classes and Mentoring Apiary
<https://beelab.umn.edu/beekeeping-classes>

Western Apicultural Society (WAS) – Monthly mini conference recordings
<https://www.westernapiculturalsociety.org/events-1>

Kansas Honey Producers Association – Extracting More \$\$\$ From Your Hives speaker series recordings
<http://www.kansashoneyproducers.org/archives.html>

University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre - <https://honeybee.uoguelph.ca/videos/video-list/>

We're buzzing with excitement about the WHPA Summer Meeting on June 11, 2022!

Where: O'so Brewing Company in Plover, WI

Registration Fee including lunch: \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members

There will be a Friday evening social for \$15 per person that includes pizza and appetizers.

The agenda is packed full of good information including updates from the honey queen, the bear committee, the state fair committee, and the WI apiary program coordinator in addition to great speakers like Brooke Nikkila, the University of Minnesota Bee Lab Program Manager.

For hotel and agenda details and to register, visit:
<https://wihoney.org/meetings-and-events/whpa-summer-meeting/>

We can't wait to see you in June!



BEES IN MY HAT

Larry Kregel

There are many lessons to be learned when one chooses to keep bees. The list likely has no end. This was my lesson number 47, a lesson quickly and well learned.

LESSON 47

I learned a great deal about bees from Irv Eberly who had been keeping bees since mustering out of the Army Air Corps after WWII. Irv was the owner of Honey Hill Bees on Route 20 just west of Pingree Grove. He was always happy to invite visitors to his little store (really little) to walk through his beeyard and huge honey house.

Besides being an A. I. Root dealer, he sold package bees and home-made nucs. In this time, packages were often delivered by the U. S. mail and shipped-in nucs were not readily available. Most beekeepers made up winter losses with splits. Irv was a great source of bees and advice.

In one visit to Honey Hill I purchased two three-frame nucs and placed them in the bed of my truck safely behind the cab. A promise to return the nuc boxes was required... no deposit. I was prone to wearing a full bee suit to work bees back then but had no thought I would need any bee gear for the trip to and from Irv's. Wrong.

Route 20 makes a couple of sharp turns as it goes through Starks. As I negotiated the second turn, I heard a flop. The three-frame nucs were a bit more top heavy

than today's more popular five-frame boxes. One of the nucs was now lying on its side and the top had popped off. The resident bees were not happy with the situation. Neither was I.

Jumping from the front seat, I needed to upright the nuc. I could only hope the flying bees would follow my truck home. Attempting to deal with the unhappy ladies, I found myself with a face full of bees. Quickly I removed my baseball hat and swung it wildly to chase them away. Then came the teachable moment.

After replacing my cap on my head, I quickly stood the offending box up and engineered a way to insure it would remain standing. Things seemed to be under control. I then realized a significant number of bees had been trapped in my hat as I swung it through the angry throng.



Just how many stings I received under my hat I do not recall. But I did learn a lesson I respect to this day. If one is to transport bees, have the bee gear on hand. True, it is often not required. But there are the times, times this forethought pays dividends.

One of many lessons taught by the bees. More to come.

CHORES OF THE MONTH - MAY

John Leibinger

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

What's happening in the hive?

Packages hived in mid-April have been steadily declining in numbers since installation as older bees die off. That will be changing now. The new package colonies will be producing their first new adult bees for 2022 around the time you are reading this and should have a mix of brood at all stages. In the next few weeks their populations will increase rapidly. In a couple weeks, maybe at month's end, depending on your mix of new foundation or drawn comb, the colony should be about ready for the addition of a second box (if you are managing via a two deep hive body process; or supers if managing via a single brood box approach), so be prepared. Alternately, if you are utilizing a three medium brood box management process, you will soon be adding a third box (that box may be an additional brood box or honey super depending on your management philosophy). Nucs hived in mid-April should be well on their way to having built out any new comb they were provided in their lower box and may well be requiring the addition of a second box soon or honey supers, again, depending on your personal management practice and goals. The weather will have a significant influence on the rate at which they build out their comb, and so far the weather this year seems favorable. Overwintered colonies, depending on their strength, will be building population fairly quickly (again, weather dependent) and are likely candidates for swarming from a couple weeks ago until the end of June. I have been hearing of swarming action already. You will notice some drones already hatched and will likely see additional drone brood at various stages. Consider this a precursor to potential swarming if you have overwintered colonies. You should be observing a lot of pollen collection daily. There was a lot of pale yellow maple pollen (or light gray from red maples) coming in during April. I observed some blue pollen being brought in from scilla a couple weeks ago. Most recently you may be seeing much more orange pollen which is from dandelions which are heavily blooming. You will also notice that they are consuming sugar syrup at an increasing rate in early May. Keep them well fed to promote colony growth.

For Beekeepers with live overwintering colonies, it is time to:

Feed. Sugar syrup at 1:1 ratio (2 lbs sugar/1 qt water...don't worry about precision)) is conventional this time of year. A small amount of heat will dissolve the sugar quickly. Allow to cool before feeding to bees.

Pollen, pollen substitute, pollen patties. Though my personal observation is that there is a lot of natural pollen coming into the hive right now, these early supplemental protein sources are good insurance to help the colony raise brood as they build forager numbers. The weather can raise havoc on the pollen supplies. A typical colony will consume upwards of 60 pounds of pollen over the course of the year, so a little early help is a good thing.

Check for swarm cells. A quick check can be made by tilting a complete hive body up and looking at the bottom of the frames for swarm cells (the top box is the most likely box that you will see the swarm cells in unless you have already done a hive body rotation). Be careful not to let the top box slide off when doing this. Get assistance if needed.

SUPER UP! If you have a strong colony of foragers, consider removing feed and adding supers to take advantage of early nectar flows. Early honey crops are possible.

Rotate Hive Bodies. If your bees have moved into the top box consider rotating the top box to the bottom. The upside to this is that it provides space for the colony to expand upwards and may reduce or delay the swarming urge. The downside is that you may be dividing the brood nest if it spans both boxes. If this situation exists, addition of a third box above or adding super(may be a better alternative.

Frame Rotation. As temps warm up, consider removing some old frames (w/o brood) and replace with new foundation as part of an annual comb renewal program. Place new foundation frames at the outer positions in the hive.

Remove Winter Wrappings.

Feel free to remove mouse guards.

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

Download the forms to register your bees with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Documents/beekeep.pdf> (Ctrl+Click link)

Finish assembling and painting additional equipment, if you have not already done it. You will need a second deep brood box (or third or fourth if using medium brood boxes) now or very soon. You may need an additional 'cover box' for feed jars or buckets. Let's hope for the best and have honey supers built and ready to install in late May or early June.

Keep feed on the bees. You should be able to monitor their syrup consumption every couple of days without going deep into the hive and causing undue disturbance.

Feed your Bees. Feed your Bees. Feed your Bees. This cannot be over-emphasized. Well feed colonies are larger and more productive. Feed them until they stop taking the supplemental feed. At some point in the month, they will likely switch over to entirely natural nectar sources at which point you can remove the feeders.

Spend time observing your bees. This is one of the reasons you took up this hobby. Observe their comings and goings. Are they bringing in pollen? What color? What is the source? Take notes.

[Nice Pollen Color Chart by Season](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. Ask for help and guidance. During these times of social distancing (though there is considerable easing up), the help may be via phone, e-mail, or text rather than hands on but still could be very helpful..

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Review your Beekeeping Goals for 2021 and act accordingly. See February month's chores list.

Make sure that you keep records. This is a very important element of the learning process...whether you are a first year beekeeper or a forty year beekeeper...you should always be learning something. Consider learning a bit about Growing Degree Days(GDD). This will give you great insight into when your local plants will be blooming. As you see the blooms emerge, note the GDD year to date for future reference.

[Explanation of Growing Degree Days](#) (Ctrl + Click link)

[Great Growing Degree Day Chart/Tool](#) (Ctrl + Click link) [Nice Seasonal Pollen Color Chart](#) (Ctrl + Click link)

Record inspection dates, time and temp and weather conditions, quantity of bees, bee behaviors, signs indicating the presence of the queen (eggs, young larvae, actual sighting), number of frames of brood and stores, brood pattern and frame/comb condition, available laying space, observations of signs of swarm preparation, pollen coming in (color, type if possible), drone production, Varroa Mite count, presence of Small Hive Beetle or other pests, and a number of other issues. Record anything else that is outside of 'normal' once you learn what 'normal' is. Take notes in the bee yard.

You will be surprised at how easy it is to get confused over what was observed and which hive it was observed in if you wait to record info after the fact. Here is an example of one of many checklists that can be found in a quick Google search. Not necessarily the best...just an example. [Hive Inspection Report](#)(Ctrl+Click link)

Remove entrance reducers. Probably in the mid-late May timeframe. As forager numbers increase and forage availability peaks, you want to make sure that the bees have easy access in and out of their hive. This is a very busy and very important time of the year for them to collect and store pollen and nectar. The ready availability of pollen and nectar resources virtually eliminates the issue of robbing this time of year.

Monitor the hives for swarming signs. Probably not a big problem for new beekeepers that started on new foundation or foundationless, but for the rest, keep your eyes peeled for telltale queen cups at the bottom of the frames. Do they have eggs or larvae in them? If they do, the swarm is coming....if not keep watching and provide additional space immediately.

Get your swarm traps out! Anybody interested in getting **FREE BEES?** This is the time of year to take advantage of the natural biological rhythms of the hive. Overwintered colonies are highly likely to swarm. Why not be an opportunist and capture a colony that otherwise will find a hole in a tree? It is fun, challenging, and **IMMENSELY EXCITING** when you find bees in your trap. Additionally, these are often colonies that have overwintered....Northern Illinois proven stock capable of handling our winter....wouldn't you want to add some of that quality to your apiary? Here is a swarm trapping website...Jason is 'the man' when it comes to swarm trapping. He has lots of advice and encouragement on swarm trapping along with free plans for building swarm traps. Check it out.

[Jason Bruns on Swarm Trapping](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Assemble some gear to be prepared to catch a swarm hanging in a tree, on a fence, or somewhere else they aren't wanted! Be ready in case a friend calls and says "Get here quick, my neighbor is freaking out! There is a bunch of bees hanging on my neighbor's swing set and we don't know what to do!"

Note: Swarm trapping and swarm 'catching' are two different things. Swarm trapping involves putting out 'bait hives' for bees to find and inhabit (and then join your apiary). Swarm catching involves capturing a swarm from a tree, bush, fence, or any of a hundred other areas that an initial swarm may land at shortly after exiting the hive and while waiting for the scout bees to find a new home. Usually this is the result of a panic phone call you receive from someone who knows you are a beekeeper. This can be an **INTENSELY EXCITING** activity.

Get your blood flowing! Capture or Trap a Swarm!



Welcome to the 2022 Beekeeping Season! Stay Safe.

BEES AND MONEY

Have you ever thought of becoming a commercial beekeeper – how about a commercial sideliner? Any interest in sending your bees on the pollination tour? Here is a chance for you to learn more about it.



At the June 3 and 4 ISBA meeting Phil Raines, a commercial beekeeper from Davis, Illinois, will lead a lunchtime round table discussion Saturday at noon talking about the opportunities and challenges of the commercial beekeeper life. Registration for the conference is at www.ilsba.com where you can also order a box lunch. Consider yourself invited to sit in with Phil and talk about commercial beekeeping.

Remember to attend what will be a great meeting.

Registration for the summer meeting of The Illinois State Beekeepers Association

June 3 and 4, 2022

Online registration is open now – www.ILSBA.com

Online payment is available.

Join in the education and camaraderie.

Your bees will be happy you did!

SWARM ANXIETY

Larry Krengel

"There seems to be no practical way to prevent swarming, and sooner or later beekeepers need to conquer their anxiety over it."
So said Richard Taylor

For the beekeeper, swarming can be a source of anxiety, but for the bees it is a thrill. It is the equivalent of a human welcoming a baby to the family. In the bee world, a swarm hanging in a tree is the christening of a new individual.

So, can swarming be all that bad?

Swarming does present problems in the modern American beeyard... or backyard. First, a swarm will likely greatly diminish an expected honey crop.

Second, there is a risk in having a colony requeen itself or being requeened by the beekeeper. It may work well, maybe not.

Third, neighbors may not enjoy the sight of a swarm in the same way a beekeeper might.

Proactive swarm actions

The advice on preventing swarming could fill an encyclopedia. Beekeepers watch for the queen cell to form on the verge of the brood frames as a sign of an imminent swarm. That is true, but often it is too late to stem the swarm tide.



I sat down to compose my thoughts on preemptively managing the swarming urge, but I have to admit that subject has already been covered by some excellent beekeepers. One of the best books was written by Wally Shaw, a Welsh beekeeper. You can buy his book *An Apiary Guide to Swarm Control* on Amazon, or he makes it available for free online -

<https://wbka.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/An-Apiary-Guide-to-Swarm-Control-2nd-edition-updatedJan21.pdf>

Here it is on Amazon -

<https://www.amazon.com/Apiary-Guide-Swarm-Control/dp/1914934369>

Free Bees

This is also the time of the bee season when bait hives become the big talk. You know... free bees. They emerge from the feral colonies in the trees and barn walls as well as from the hives of unaware neighboring keepers. I love the challenge of luring my neighbor's swarm into my bait hive! Thanks.

If you are up for the challenge, read Tom Seeley's 30-year-old treatise on bait hives -

<https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/2653/Bait%20Hives%20for%20Honey%20Bees.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

Beyond that, there are many bait hive designs found with a Google search.

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Website and Newsletter Submissions

www.nibainfo.org – The Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association website. A wealth of information is available. Contact board members via email, download the membership form, access copies of the newsletter. Terri is asking for your pictures, stories, etc. to have them highlighted on the web page!
reevestherese@att.net

This is YOUR newsletter. Please feel free to contribute. Or let us know if you have any topics you'd like to see covered. newsletter@nibainfo.org

Membership Has Its Benefits!

- By Randy Mead

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent a club manual honey extractor? We have two to choose from. Rental is \$10 for a 3-day rental. \$20 (\$10 for rental and \$10 deposit) is due when you pick up the extractor.

Schedule a pick-up time, extract your honey and return the equipment in 3 days. The \$10 deposit will be returned if the extractor is clean and returned on time.

To reserve a date, contact Randy by text or email at 847-571-1899 or rmeadtoys@gmail.com.

Are you on Facebook? So are we!

Search for Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association. It's a closed group, so you need to request to join—but we're happy to approve your request.

We're an active and knowledgeable group. Lots of questions and answers about the Fall season and preparing for winter, robbing, etc. And LOTS of pictures!

Join the fun today!

**The queen marking color for
2022 is YELLOW.**